785 sort of compensation for the abstinence endured all through the day, /206/ and this feast sometimes lasts until morning, during which gluttony is as great as is humanly possible. When traveling, these Moslem fasts often drove me nearly to despair. During the days, the men could not be used for anything as a result of lack of sleep, and of hunger and thirst, and at night when one was exausted from the exertions of traveling there was not a moment of peace for all night long the shouting and howling and the noise of drums and all possible musical instruments never ceased. And people regard such unhealthy fasts, alternated with orgies night after night, as deeds pleasing to God.

778 796 As regards superstition, the Central Asian Moslems are second to no other religious body. The tombs and the alleged clothing and relics of their countless saints, whose claim to this rank is usually very questionable, play a great role among them. In Central Asia there are many apocryphal tombs of saints, as for example, the tombs of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, in Mazar -i-Sharif and in Shakh-i-Mardan. There is also the monument to Alexander the Great in Margelan, the tomb of Daniel in Samarkand, and many others. We know from history that Alexander always aspired to the honor of being nominated to the ranks of the gods during his lifetime, although his ambition was never realized; instead of this, he was subsequently granted an honor on which he had not reckoned, namely, to be venerated after two thousand years as a Moslem saint and as a propagator of Islam in Central Asia. The Moslems of Turkestan have an unshakable faith in the healing powers of relics and amulets. Chips from the tombstone (1) are regarded as an infallible means against

777 [755]

> 1. This tombstone is chiselled from a single block of dark green nephrite, and is of incalculable value. The stone has been cut in half in the middle by an unknown hand, and superstitious Moslems and Russian collecters have broken off pieces from this broken place, as can be seen in Figure 75.

all internal illnesses, which has resulted in an extensive trade in fake particles from the tomb of Tamerlane. How Tamerlane came to have the odor of sanctity is somewhat difficult for Westerners to understand. An equally lucrative trade is carried on by the mullahs with amulets which they have made themselves, and which ostensibly contain miraculous prayer formulas and charms. Their content, however, is often similiar to the

777 well-known slips of paper of Passau, which were supposed to make the owner invulnerable, but which actually contained no more than the sentence "Scoundrel, defend yourself!" These amulets can be purchased for precious /207/ gold, mostly from the apothecaries and the Jews, who are especially competent in such things, and are usually in a small three-cornered bag, or in a cylinder of thin silver or cardboard and the like (Figure 76, p. 208), worn on a cord around the neck or over the shoulders. /Figure 75. Caption: The Tombstone of Tamerlane and his family in Samarkand. (The dark, disfigured stone in the middle is Tamerlane's tombstone.)/ Even /209/ the domestic animals, especially the horses are hung with amulets in order to protect them from bad luck and sickness. The Moslems of Turkestan, especially the Tadjiks, often show particular veneration for certain holy trees. These are, as a rule, ancient trees, standing in isolation, which are ostensibly planted by some saint and their shade is naturally very much desired by weary travelers. The travelers manifest their veneration for these holy trees by cutting off rags from their clothes and tying them to the twigs. The appearance of the trees decorated in this fashion naturally leaves something to be desired, particularly if the rags attached are as numerous as the leaves, as is often the case. This tree cult is obviously still another survival from Indo-European antiquity. It is known that Xerxes on his journey to Greece gave gifts to a tree under the shade of which he had rested, hanging on its twigs golden chains and clasps. It is likewise known how much veneration the ancient Teutons showed for their holy trees, so much so that the Christian missionaries found themselves induced to cut these trees down in order to accelerate the conversion of the Teutons. The May trees and Christmas trees still used among the Germans today probably go back in like manner to an earlier tree cult.

/Figure 76. Caption: Amulet Holders./

771 The Central Asian Moslems were unusually fanatical before the Russian domination, as we have already mentioned, and there was great anxiety on the part of the /209/ Russians at first as to how they would live peaceably with such fanatics. As it turned out later, however, this fanaticism was only the work of a few interested circles, those of the rais, the duvanas, the ishans and the mullahs, who held the common people in their grip. Since the power of these professional fanatics has been broken in the Russian dominions in that they are no longer supported from above, and the people are left to themselves, it has turned out that the people's fanaticism is not nearly of so much

k von Schwarz--45b N-5 (ca 1895) 1900 RL1 Turkestan RL1

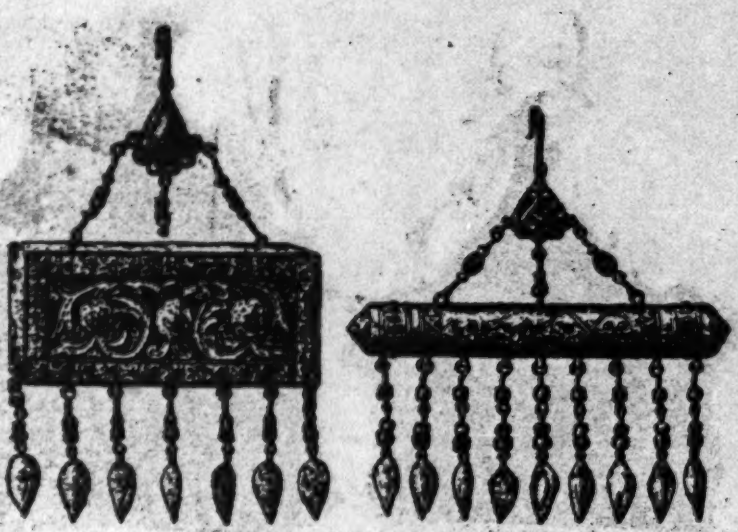

Fig. 111. Amulet Holders.